

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1 - 25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously presented) A refractory metal plate comprising  
a thickness,  
a center, and  
an edge,  
the metal being selected from the group consisting of tantalum and niobium, said  
metal being of at least 99.99% purity, the plate having an average grain size of less than 40  
microns and a texture that is uniform both through said thickness and from said center to said  
edge, and further wherein said refractory metal plate has
- i) a constant mix of grains with orientation {100} and {111} crystallographic  
orientations, and
  - ii) a distribution of {100} and {111} crystallographic orientations that varies by less  
than 30 percent across the surface of any plane of said refractory metal plate, said  
planes being selected from planes that are orthogonal to the thickness of said  
refractory metal plate, and planes that are diagonal to the thickness of said  
refractory metal plate, and uniform through the thickness from the center of the  
plate to the edge of the plate with no preferred direction within the plate so there is  
not a predominantly {100} or {111} orientation and
  - iii) a distribution of {100} and {111} crystallographic orientations that varies by less  
than 30 percent across any thickness of said refractory metal plate.

27. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 27, wherein the  
metal is tantalum.

28. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 27, comprising at least 99.999% tantalum.

29. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate of claim 26, wherein the metal is niobium.

30. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 26, wherein the metal is selected from the group consisting of tantalum, alloys of tantalum, niobium, alloys of niobium and said metal being of at least 99.999% purity.

31. (Withdrawn) A sputtering target comprising the plate as claimed in claim 26.

32. (Previously presented) A refractory metal plate comprising

a thickness,

a center, and

an edge,

the metal being selected from the group consisting of tantalum and niobium, the plate having a texture that is uniform both through said thickness and from said center to said edge, and further wherein said refractory metal plate has

- i) a distribution of {100} and {111} crystallographic orientations that varies by less than 30 percent across the surface of any plane of said refractory metal plate, and is uniform through the thickness from the center of the plate to the edge of the plate with no preferred direction within the plate so there is not a predominantly {100} or {111} orientation and
- ii) a distribution of {100} and {111} crystallographic orientations that varies by less than 30 percent across any thickness of said refractory metal plate.

33. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 32, wherein the metal is tantalum.

34. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 33, comprising at least 99.999% tantalum.

35. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate of claim 32, wherein the metal is niobium.

36. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 32, wherein the metal is selected from the group consisting of tantalum, alloys of tantalum, niobium, alloys of niobium and said metal being of at least 99.999% purity.

37. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 32, wherein said planes being selected from planes that are orthogonal to the thickness of said refractory metal plate, and planes that are diagonal to the thickness of said refractory metal plate.

38. (Previously presented) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 32, wherein said plate has an average grain size of less than 40 microns.

39. (New) The refractory metal plate as claimed in claim 34, wherein said plate has an average grain size of less than 40 microns.